communication between driver/guard and control.

(v) Walkie-talkie sets have been provided to Drivers and Guards of all trains for faster and better means of communication.

(vi) There has been progressive increase in the use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance. Also, Track Renewal Trains are being used.

(vii) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accelerometers are being used progressively.

(viii) For detection of rail fractures/weld failures, adequate double rail Ultra Sonic Flaw Detectors have been procured. Self Propelled Ultrasonic Rail Testing Cars are being procured.

(ix) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.

(x) Routine Over Hauling Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles so as to prevent cases of cold breakage of axles.

(xi) Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

(xii) Periodical Safety Audit of different Divisions by inter-disciplinary teams from Zonal Headquarters is being conducted.

(xiii) Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training courses also.

(xiv) periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff and road users.

(xv) Stringent penalty to the extent of dismissal/removal from service is being imposed on officials causing serious accidents.

Employment of Retired Railway Employees in commercial Institutions

†1178. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of retired railway employees are

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

employed with commercial institutions, contracting with the Railways;

(b) if, so the details thereof and the posts held by each of them formerly;

(c) whether it is also a fact that they give undue benefits to the private enterprises because of their earlier knowledge and acquaintance and affect the working of the Railways, and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto and the steps taken to check the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (d) Only Group 'A' officers are required to seek prior permission from the Government for getting employed with a private firm during the first two years following retirement and Group 'B' officers are required to inform the Railway in such cases. Apart from this, there is no restriction or condition in the retired railway employees accepting commercial employment with firms including those contracting with the Railways. Therefore, it is not possible to maintain information regarding all such employees, employed with commercial institutions. In view of this, it is also not possible to have feed back on such retired employees giving undue benefit, if any, to others.

Support from fund for Sciecne Infrastructure in Karnataka

1179. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) How many academic institutions in Karnataka have been supported through the programmes of Fund of Improvement of Science and Technology Infrastructure during 2001-2002 and 2002-2003; so far; and

(b) the amount released to these institutions during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT):

(a) and (b) Under the Fund for Improvement of Science and Technology Infrastructure (FIST) Program, so far a total support of Rs. 21.7 crores has